

Housing, community market

## USING CITY LAND

At a time when the provincial government has been selling some of its property, and has suggested school boards do so, the City of Vancouver says it intends to hang on to its land assets.

Vancouver city council last week heard plans to use city-owned land for several projects aimed at providing affordable housing, growing food, arts, community activities, employment and volunteer experience.

In separate reports, senior city staff outlined several city sites slated for housing projects plus others to be used on a street market and urban farm. (See story page 4)

The comments about holding on to land came as Councillor **Melissa de Genova** asked what happens after long-term leases with operators of housing on city land expire.

City manager **Penny Ballem** was emphatic that the city has no plans to sell property, but needs to work with non-profit organizations to make the best use of it.

“The fundamental principle is we’re not going to sell our land,” she said. “There’s never going to be any more land in the city of Vancouver and there’s grave concern about other levels of government that are selling off their land. And whether there are long-term-leases or other arrangements, we are going to hang on to the final tenure of that land.”

She said the city will “aggressively manage” [CONTINUED PAGE 7](#)

Surrey Fraser docks

## NO COAL, METRO SAYS

By Chris Rose

A highly controversial proposal to export coal from Fraser Surrey Docks on the Fraser River suffered another setback Friday when the Metro Vancouver board voted to re-affirm its opposition to the project.

The regional district board voted to tell both **Port Metro Vancouver** and **Fraser Surrey Docks** that it was against additional coal shipments in the river estuary other than the existing Robert Banks coal port in Delta.

The board’s motion noted that member municipalities including Richmond, Delta, New Westminster and Surrey all have significant concerns with the proposed direct transfer coal facility at Fraser Surrey Docks, and that their concerns remain unresolved.

“We don’t feel there have been updates on the assessments we asked for,” Surrey Councillor **Judy Villeneuve**, who presented the motion, told *NRU* following the vote. “Part of this issue is they provide very little information on what their plans are.”

Villeneuve added the demand for coal is actually going down and owners of U.S. mines want to export as much as possible of their product before the global market dries up further.

She said the mine owners want to use [CONTINUED PAGE 10](#)

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# UPCOMING DATES

- JUNE 15**  
Vancouver heritage commission, 11 a.m.  
Development permit board, 3 p.m.
- JUNE 17**  
Vancouver city planning commission, 12:15  
Urban design panel, 4 p.m.
- JUNE 22**  
Vancouver park board, 7 p.m.
- JUNE 23**  
Vancouver city council, 9:30 a.m.
- JUNE 24**  
Vancouver city council planning, transportation and environment committee 9:30 a.m.
- JUNE 25**  
Public hearing, 6 p.m.
- JULY 3**  
Metro Vancouver board, 9 a.m.
- JULY 6**  
Vancouver heritage commission, 11 a.m.  
Vancouver park board, 7 p.m.
- JULY 7**  
Vancouver city council, 9:30 a.m.
- JULY 8**  
Vancouver city council finance and services committee 9:30 a.m.
- JULY 10**  
Regional mayors committee, 1 p.m.
- JULY 13**  
Development permit board, 3 p.m.
- JULY 15**  
Vancouver city planning commission, 12:15



## Housing and hotel

# DEVELOPMENT PERMIT BOARD

Vancouver's development permit board today reviews two residential projects — one containing social housing and the other aimed at tourists.

### 95 East First

The board sees a social-housing project that's a neighbour of another building it approved near the Olympic Village earlier this year.

**DYS Architecture's** scheme for a 15-storey building and three-storey podium containing 135 non-market rental units,

The tower, one of five in **Concert Properties'** development at First and Quebec is being developed for the city as a turnkey social-housing project.

The entire site borders southeast False Creek, and consists of two properties, one of which is owned by the city.

A large park is planned for the western side of the site and two new roads are included in the project.

The urban design panel supported the project in May, although some members had concerns that not all units had balconies, and some wanted design development of the entrance and the north side of the building.

The board approved the first project on the site, a 15-storey residential building at

1661 Quebec, with a seven-storey wing and a two-storey townhouse podium, in March.

### 1128 Alberni

This is an application to convert part of an existing apartment tower at Alberni and Thurlow to hotel suites.

**Musson Cattell Mackey Partnership** has applied to change 98 units on 12 floors of the 34-storey building from rental residential uses.

The Carmana Plaza is already listed on websites such as Expedia, Hotels.com and Trip Advisor as a hotel and advertises itself as an all-suite hotel. [nru](#)



Model of building at 95 East First.

NRU PHOTO

Ian A.R. Graham, Publisher,  
[iang@nrupublishing.com](mailto:iang@nrupublishing.com)

Karenn Krangle, Writer/Editor  
[karennk@nrupublishing.com](mailto:karennk@nrupublishing.com)

Jeff Payette, Layout/Graphics  
[jeffp@nrupublishing.com](mailto:jeffp@nrupublishing.com)

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**NRU Publishing Inc.**  
**Vancouver Editorial Office**  
1350 Burrard Street, Suite 368  
Vancouver, BC V6Z 0C2  
T: 604.779.6135  
F: 416.979.2707

**Billings Department**  
34B McMurrich Street  
Toronto, ON M5R 2A2  
Tel: 416.440.0073  
Fax: 416.440.0074



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Urban design panel

# WATERFRONT TOWER WORKSHOP

A closer look at how the space next to the old CPR station on the waterfront could be developed is the topic of one of two workshops on the agenda for Vancouver’s urban design panel this week.

The panel will hear from architect **Gordon Gill** of Chicago’s **AS+GG Architecture**, working locally with architect **James Cheng** and **B+H Architects**, who brought a controversial design for a faceted tower to the panel in January.

The panel voted not to support the tower, saying it was out of context with the site and had other design concerns.

The scheme also brought a lot of negative public reaction, and the panel’s meeting meeting was so well attended that city staff had to make extra space.

Wednesday’s meeting could be just as well attended as panel members and the architects review the site, its context and design issues.

Also Wednesday, the Vancouver city planning commission hears a presentation from the Downtown Waterfront Working Group, which has called on the city to take another look at the

2009 Waterfront Hub plan, which includes the station area, 200 Granville, over the rail tracks, the SeaBus terminal and envisions elevated roadways over the railway tracks and an extension of the north end of Granville.

The working group also feels the tower is out of context and wants to see the area reviewed before any development plans are approved.

[Bus barn site](#)

The other panel workshop Wednesday will be on planning for **TransLink’s** old bus barn site at 41st and Oak.

City planners and a representative of **Perkins + Will**, which is working with the city on a plan for the 13.8-acre site known as Oakridge Transit Centre, will present their draft concept plan to the panel.

City council last year endorsed a planning program for the site, bounded by Oak, 41st, Willow and 38th, and it is expected to become a new, midrise residential district featuring a large park and a variety of housing types.

Planners presented three concepts in February, which varied in their placement of a central street and the park with different inner street and housing patterns, with the tallest building facing 41st.

The panel will also look at planning concepts for three adjacent site, including the Jewish Community Centre, the gas station at the corner of 41st and Oak and Oakmont medical centre at 41st and Willow

These sites are part of a comprehensive plan for 41st Avenue between Oak and Willow streets.

City planning staff have also scheduled an open house Thursday on the draft plan for the site, from 5:30 to 8:30 pm. at VanDusen Gardens, 5251 Oak.

A second open house will be held at the same location Saturday from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. [nru](#)



The workshop will discuss this site.

NRU PHOTO

City-owned land

# HOUSING AND OTHER USES

By Karenn Krangle

The City of Vancouver has identified 12 city-owned sites to be used to build affordable housing, with seven to be developed as soon as possible, city council was told last week.

Chief housing officer **Mukhtar Latif** said the plan is to create 1,350 units over the next four years, as outlined in the city's 2015-18 capital plan.

He said the first phase will see development of up to 810 units subject to rezoning and council community.

"The way we have identified these sites is we have a mix of housing across the city with the geographic distribution-unit mix to meet those different needs," he said. "We're looking at projects that have SRO [single-room occupancy hotels] replacement, meet the needs of families, as well as looking at people [with] low incomes and seniors."

The sites are five parcels in the River District (East Fraserlands), one on West Hastings in the Downtown Eastside and on on Fraser Street in Kensington-Cedar Cottage. Latif said the River District sites will be most suited to families.

Latif said the projects will be starting in the next year, with qualifying developers for the sites, working out financing with senior-government agencies and others, putting out RFP for developers to secure short-term financing, working towards rezoning if necessary and issuing RFPs for housing operators.

"The process we have in place will enable us to move ahead very quickly," he said, adding the planning process, including community engagement, should take six months to a year. "Those will then be developed out in the next 24 months."

Latif said the city has identified 12 of its sites altogether, with these seven being the first phase, for a goal of about 2,500 new units in seven years.

Councillor Geoff Meggs said he can't imagine much community opposition to the projects, given the pressure for more affordable housing.

"These city-owned sites are only part of the inventory, so if [provincial housing] Minister [**Rich**] **Coleman** phoned tomorrow morning to the mayor and said, 'I want to do another 14 sites for social housing, and I need the city to step up as it did in the past with land, we'd have that land, is that right?'" he asked. "This is not at the expense of Victoria stepping back into that role?"

Latif said the city has examined 20 city-owned sites that could be used for housing.

"We're fortunate with the property endowment fund that has been invested in land since the 1970s," he said. "There are assets across the city that we could review and bring forward."

We've been given the opportunity through the [Vancouver Affordable Housing] Agency to bring forward city-owned land as an opportunity to create the supply ... but we do need partners to come to the table to drive that affordability and that supply as well."

## POWELL STREET MARKET

Council also heard a presentation from **Mary Clare Zak**, of the city's community services department, on plans to use four city-owned lots in the 500-block Powell as a new home for the Downtown Eastside street market.

She said the land is ultimately slated for social housing, but in the meantime the site at Powell and Jackson could also accommodate urban agriculture.

She added that many people on the street in the area have asked for more opportunities for vending and low-barrier employment.

Zak said the market currently operates at Pigeon Park, but that location is no longer large enough to accommodate all the vendors.

"The street market has grown in its sophistication, it's grown in capacity," she said, but noted the park at Carrall and Hastings could be used by local artists and entertainers.

The market is also part of the Downtown Eastside community economic development strategy, whose goal is to support community initiatives, create employment and strengthen the local economy.

The market would operate three days a week and on the remaining four days, part of the site would be used by local artists and other "makers" to make and fix things. Gardening would be done every day on another side of the property.

"An opportunity to bring Vancouver residents together with the neighbourhood," she said, noting about 60 per cent of visitors to the market are not from the Downtown Eastside.

Market coordinator **Roland Clarke**

CONTINUED PAGE 5 ▶

## Housing

# VACANT HOMES STUDY TO BEGIN

Vancouver's Affordable Housing Agency is about to appoint a consultant to examine the extent of vacant houses and condos.

Chief housing officer **Mukhtar Latif** said the city is also about to meet with **B.C. Hydro** to go over data on power usage as it possibly relates to occupancy of homes in the city to try to understand how many are empty.

"There will be an analysis on the data and the number of vacant homes based on usage, and that will be carried out on an anonymized basis," he told city council, adding that concern had been expressed about confidentiality.

Acknowledging that power use is not always the best indicator of occupancy, Latif said the city is also looking at other ways of tracking empty homes.

He said there is a lack of data that allows the city to record vacancy rates and how to define a vacant home.

"The data we have had to date is on an annual basis and that is hard to know when people are away and what usage looks like," he said. "There is a wide range of reasons why homes are left empty."

The vacant-homes issue came up in council last month when Latif said the city is planning to develop a website where residents can report vacant houses and condominiums and would hire a consultant to assess how many homes are empty in Vancouver.

He said the city also needs to know if there is an "abnormal vacancy rate compared to other cities. We need to consider that first before we take any actions,"

City manager **Penny Ballem** called the study an opportunity.

"The whole reason for this is we're not going to punish people for having a vacant home," she said. "Does it present an opportunity for interim housing for people who are looking for rental for families and neighbourhoods?"

"We need to know the extent of it and whether it's worth pursuing."

The comments came as Latif gave council an update on the progress of the year-old affordable housing agency, which aims to provide affordable units, with an emphasis on two- and three-bedroom units and townhouses suitable for families. [nru](#)

## HOUSING AND OTHER USES

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

told council that the market, at which some vendors sell items found in bins and dumpsters, keeps up to 100 tonnes of material a year out of the landfill. People also sell handicrafts, second-hand goods and other items but not prepared food, he said.

Zak said there will be future social housing on the Powell site.

"The idea would be that we maintain the street market and other economic development activities that we place on the site," she said.

Zak also said the city is looking at its assets in the Downtown

Eastside to see how they could be used for "purposeful activities," such as economic development, drop-in centres, community activities or recreation

She said there is also a plan to use a site at 65 East Hastings — the old Lux Theatre site — for arts and community space.

Zak said the city has licensed space at 62 East Hastings from **BC Housing** for a tool-shed library and creative space, and is proposing 30-stall street market three days a week.

Council heard from 17 speakers, most in support of the market, but a decision was deferred for two weeks because of a heavy agenda. [nru](#)

Residential development

# FOCUSING ON FAMILIES

The City of Vancouver is looking to encourage developers to increase the supply of three-bedroom units in secured market rental and strata buildings.

Chief housing officer **Mukhtar Latif** told city council last week that the city is seeing increased pressure for family housing and is looking at ways to “incentivize” development of more family units through policy that would require more three-bedroom units.

“Through rezonings and inclusionary housing policies we will review the existing family target of 25 per cent and look to increase this to 35 per cent family housing with a minimum of 10 per cent being three-bedroom units,” he said. “This will be subject to economic analysis and consultation with key stakeholders to make sure projects remain viable and appropriate incentives are put in place to enable three-bedroom housing to be built across the city.

“We will also review the design guidelines to accommodate the changes in lifestyle since the guidelines were developed and continue to provide livable quality housing.”

He explained that the city would consult with neighbourhoods to identify areas for more density.

Councillor **Geoff Meggs** wondered if some community plans had obstacles to this, but city manager **Penny Ballem** said some sub-areas have been discussed.

“We have more work to help the public understand ... what problems we are trying to solve,” she said. “The public are starting to realize that we do need more variety.

“We need to build on the community plans that are there and go back in areas where we think there is potential and see what the interest of the community may be to make some adjustments.”

Head planner **Brian Jackson** also said the city could create new townhouse zones and could “pre-zone” for certain types of buildings as the city has done in Marpole.

“That takes out a big step developers don’t have to go through,” he said.

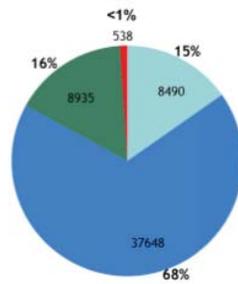
Latif said the main focus will remain on rental housing as the most affordable option for families, but will also look at strata projects because many aspire to own their own homes.

“We continue to encourage more diverse forms of house types, such as town houses, duplexes, row houses so that families have a wider choice of type of housing available to

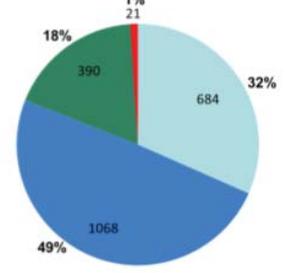
## Trends: Family Rental Stock



CoV Market Rental Stock by Bedrooms (2013)



Permits for CoV New Secured Market Rental by Bedrooms (2012-2014)



■ Studio ■ 1 Bed ■ 2 Bed ■ 3 Bed

SOURCES: CMHC, PRIVATE RENTAL APARTMENTS SURVEY, 2013  
CITY OF VANCOUVER, PERMIT DATA 2015

them aside from condos and single-family dwellings,” he said, and added co-housing to the list.

Latif also said the city is exploring new models for entry-level home ownership for people with moderate to middle incomes and will report back to council later.

Latif said the city’s 2015-18 capital plan contains provision for affordable housing projects.

He said social-housing projects would have a target of 50 per cent family units.

City council recently approved adding three-bedroom units in the Rental 100 secured market rental policy.

Planner **Allison Dunnet** told council that about 8,000 families (defined as at least one parent and one child) live in one-bedroom and studio apartments in Vancouver and more than 600 families were on **BC Housing’s** waiting list for larger units.

She also noted that the federal government spends 40 per cent less on affordable housing programs than in 1989.

“And if the provincial government does not step in with a rental supplement program to replace federal subsidies, many low-income people will not be able to afford the break-even rent required to rejuvenate and operate co-ops sustainably,” she said.

Dunnet noted that although many families are smaller now, about half of families would be need at least three bedrooms. She also pointed to adult children living at home longer or returning to parents’ residences.

She said more families have been living in apartments over the past 20 years. [nru](#)

Federation of Canadian Municipalities

# CITIES AS STRONG HOME TOWNS

By Chris Rose

The new president of the **Federation of Canadian Municipalities** said last week that his organization has just launched a new report showing ways of reducing commute times, creating safer roads and bridges, providing cleaner water and developing more affordable housing.

“This is a guide for Canadians to the upcoming federal election,” Vancouver Councillor **Raymond Louie** said in a news release. “It is a plan to make our country stronger and life better for all Canadians.”

The 15-page *Roadmap for Strong Cities and Communities* says it has solutions for jobs and growth, livable, safer and environmentally sustainable regions. It also looks at global municipal connections.

In addition, the report notes “a strong Canada starts with strong home towns.”

The report says home towns are the engines that drive the nation forward, the places where people work, raise families, contribute and engage with others.

“They are hubs of innovation, creativity, and community,” it said. “With a federal election in 2015, we have an opportunity to truly build the Canada of tomorrow, a Canada where our cities and communities are growing and creating jobs. Together, we can make our home towns more livable, safer, and places that contribute to a cleaner environment and a more connected world.”

In a telephone interview, Louie told *NRU* that the FCM wants to improve the lives of Canadians and is always trying to work with the federal and provincial governments to understand the need to provide funds for replacing, repairing and building civic infrastructure.

In 2012, the FCM published the first *Canadian Infrastructure Report Card* looking at drinking water systems, wastewater and stormwater networks, and municipal roads. Based on data from 123 communities, the rating showed a significant portion of municipal infrastructure ranked between “fair” and “very poor,” on average 30 per cent. The report estimated the replacement cost of the assets at about \$178 billion.

“Without these investments our quality of life as Canadians goes down,” said Louie, who is currently serving his fifth term on Vancouver city council.

He is also acting mayor and vice-chair of the Metro Vancouver regional board.

The FCM also wants a national leaders’ debate on hometown issues. So far, said Louie, **Thomas Mulcair** of the New Democratic Party of Canada, **Justin Trudeau** of the Liberal Party of Canada and **Elizabeth May** of the Green Party of Canada have agreed to such a debate. The governing Conservative Party of Canada has not.

More information about the Roadmap report and the FCM can be obtained at [www.fcm.ca](http://www.fcm.ca). [NRU](#)

## USING CITY LAND

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operators’ agreements to sustain the asset that “they’ve had the privilege to lease.”

Chief housing officer **Mukhtar Latif** said the city’s property endowment fund, which was established in the 1970s, offers a supply of land that could be used for housing projects managed by operators on a long-term lease.

A provincial government audit last week said the Vancouver school board should close or sell some schools to save money. The school board has said it is opposed to selling its land and would prefer to lease out redundant school property because it might be needed in the future as the population changes. Other school districts, such as North Vancouver, have sold some of their land. [NRU](#)

Urban Land Institute panel discussion

# HEALTHY BUILT ENVIRONMENTS

By Karenn Krangle

Architects, developers, planners and builders can help improve a community's health with a built environment that encourages physical activity, healthy food, water and environment and fosters social well-being, an **Urban Land Institute** event was told last week.

At a panel discussion on building healthy places and communities, ULI senior research associate **Sara Hammerschmidt** outlined the recent *Healthy Places Initiative* by the parent ULI body in the U.S., which came up with 21 recommendations for health development practices.

Speaking by video conference from Washington D.C., Hammerschmidt said the goals of the initiative was to raise awareness; define the approach to design, programming and materials; explore the value of building health-promoting places; and advance the state of practice and policy.

She said many health issues, such as obesity, diabetes, asthma, respiratory diseases and even cancer can be related to the built environment.

Hammerschmidt addressed eight of the initiative's recommendations for developers:

- Incorporate a mix of land uses;
- Design well-connected street networks at the human scale;
- Provide infrastructure to support biking;
- "Host" a farmers' market;
- Support on-site gardening and farming;
- Use materials and products that support healthy indoor air quality;
- Increase access to nature;
- Facilitate social engagement.

**Martin Nielsen**, a principal at **DIALOG**, discussed his firm's involvement in designing the concept for the Pearson-Dogwood site at 57th and Cambie, which will turn a 2.5-acre care campus into a health-centred mixed community.

He called it a game-changer for his firm.

"When it went to council there was no discussion of height or density," he said. "It was all about the health model."

**Sean Hodgins**, president of **Century Group**, talked about

his large Southlands project in Tsawwassen, which he said integrates agriculture with housing and other mixed uses.

In exchange for planning permission for residential and some retail uses on the 537-acre site, the old Spetifore farm, Hodgins said he agreed to give back to the municipality 400 acres for agriculture.

"This will become the community's farm," he said. "What if, instead of isolating agriculture, we could design a community around agriculture?"

The developed portion consists of various forms of housing with a "market square."

Hodgins also discussed the need to move away from a car-oriented community towards a complete one.

**Ashley O'Neil**, vice-president for corporate strategy at **CBRE**, said a healthy workplace is important, too.

Her firm is involved in reviewing the office environment, including less traditional work stations, ergonomic furniture, use of non-toxic materials to improve the indoor environment, a layout that encourages people to use stairs and inside plantings to bring an element of nature to the office.

"The workplace is changing and we're starting to look at the workplace as an experience more than just a space," she said.

More on the ULI's initiative: [www.uli.org/health](http://www.uli.org/health) 

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## Coquitlam

# COMPETING VISIONS FOR RIVERVIEW

By Chris Rose

More than 200 people who gathered in Coquitlam last week to take part in a panel discussion on the future of the Riverview lands heard that redeveloping the vast property near the Fraser River is going to be an expensive task.

They also heard that the community needs to be flexible to proposed changes, since there are many competing visions for the future of the property, which **BC Housing** has said will be developed as a fiscally responsible, or “break-even,” project.

**Tsur Somerville**, director of the UBC Centre for Urban Economics and Real Estate, said it will be a significant challenge to rehabilitate the 1,000-acre site which began as a mental institution in 1904 and was closed in 2012.

Referring to just the East Lawn building, which opened in 1930 and was originally known as the Female Chronic Unit, Somerville said a “break-even” project is divided into capital costs, such as construction and renovation, and operating costs such as market unit rents paying for subsidized units.

He said East Lawn is a 361,000 square-foot structure in very poor condition that requires about \$25 million to bring it up to modern standards.

One way of raising the money required to renovate East Lawn, he said, would be to have a developer build 80 single-family homes elsewhere on the Riverview lands at about \$885,000 each. Other financial methods could involve the construction of 450 townhouses at \$475,000 each or 500 apartments in 10-12 four-storey buildings at \$320,000 per unit.

“We all have a vision for the Riverview lands,” Somerville said, adding it costs a lot of money for parks, heritage preservation, subsidized residential care and non-market housing.

The Riverview lands have about 1,800 mature native and non-native trees, some dating back to 1912. The lands are claimed by the **Kwikwetlem First Nation** as part of its traditional territory that has been continually occupied for at least 9,000 years.

The provincial government holds title to the land. Designed to house 1,800 patients, the hospital’s population peaked in 1951 at 4,630 people. Riverview still contains 75 buildings. It began as the Hospital for the Mind in 1904, was named Essondale in 1913 and renamed Riverview in 1966.

Its main buildings have included the Provincial Industrial School for boys; West Lawn, Centre Lawn and East Lawn, all psychiatric units; and Crease Clinic, which began as a veterans’ facility.

The site also includes Colony Farm, which for years provided food for the hospital, and is now a provincial park.

**Brent Toderian**, a former chief planner for Vancouver, speaking on the idea of a “complete community” that is not enslaved by automobile transportation, said increased density and critical mass is required to make a development popular and well-rounded.

Toderian said the Riverview lands could be successfully redeveloped if they met most of people’s daily needs such as shops and services within five- to 10-minute walk. A complete community also requires jobs, a mix of housing types, and transit connections between the neighbourhood and the rest of the city.

“Riverview will need a lot of re-thinking,” he said adding one way of doing that would be to change the NIMBY (not in my backyard) opposition-to-change mindset to the more welcoming IMBY (in my backyard) approach.

The magic of density done well, he said, equals less unattractive suburban sprawl.

Dr. **Julian Somers**, a clinical psychologist specializing in policies and services related to addiction and mental health, said the redeveloped Riverview lands could become an international success story by including housing for people experiencing and recovering from mental illness.

Agreeing, **Darrell Burnham**, chief executive officer of **Coast Foundation Society**, a non-profit society which operates an array of housing and rehabilitation services for mentally ill people, said Riverview could

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# NO COAL, METRO SAYS

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the proposed coal-export facility in Surrey because ports in the U.S. are against coal shipments.

“I just think this is the wrong project for the day,” Villeneuve said, noting she is extremely concerned about accelerating climate change caused by the continued use of toxic fossil fuels. “I also don’t trust the burning of coal.”

Fraser Surrey Docks had originally proposed using trains to bring U.S. coal to Surrey where it would be loaded on to barges and shipped to Texada Island before being transferred to coal-carrying ships for export.

Recently the company indicated it was abandoning the barge proposal in favour of loading coal on to ocean-going vessels at its Surrey site.

In May, the company received a letter endorsed by 58 organizations and businesses and signed by 2,944 people working to stop U.S. thermal coal exports in both British Columbia and the western United States.

The letter said the proposal would increase open-car coal train traffic through residential communities, exposing families to more diesel exhaust, more coal dust, and more night-time noise from trains.

“When burned, the coal exported from Fraser Surrey Docks would release as much global warming pollution as the sixth-largest polluter in Canada — just behind the two biggest tar sands processing facilities and the three biggest coal-fired power plants,” the letter said.

United Nations Climate Chief **Christiana Figueres** has said

that in order to avoid runaway, catastrophic climate change there is no room in the world for new coal developments, the letter said, adding the proposal would also increase freighter traffic in local waters, increasing the risk of oil spills and shipping accidents and impacts on wild salmon and endangered orca populations.

“The end of the age of coal has been acknowledged by a wide range of organizations including the World Bank, **HSBC**, **Goldman Sachs**, the International Energy Agency, the US Export-Import Bank and even executives of your company’s owner, the **MacQuarrie Group**,” the letter to Fraser Surrey Docks said.

“We share their concerns about coal and climate change and our opposition to this project will not end. We want our communities to host the ports of tomorrow, not the ports of yesterday.”

**Kevin Washbrook**, a spokesperson for Voters Taking Action on Climate Change, said he was pleased by Metro Vancouver’s continued rejection of the proposed facility.

The Fraser Surrey Docks coal proposal is also emblematic of problems associated with fossil fuel projects being proposed for other parts of B.C., he said.

“We are concerned about the proposal because it involves the export of U.S. thermal coal brought in by trains and taken out by ships through our communities at a time when we know we have to cut emissions from coal.” **nru**

# COMPETING VISIONS

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provide a place for mentally ill people to recover and contribute to society.

Last week’s panel session was the fourth open house held to gather input about how to redevelop the lands.

Most people responding to the first three open houses said there should be some kind of mental-health facility on the site. Some said there should be some parkland at Riverview

and there has been some resistance to market housing.

Any residential development should have diversity, should be low rise with a lot of public space and there should be some mixed uses, according to public comments.

The provincial government has not agreed to any of these ideas.

More information can be obtained at: [www.renewing-riverview.com](http://www.renewing-riverview.com) **nru**

# VANCOUVER BRIEFS

## [Marijuana hearing](#)

Vancouver city council's lengthy public hearing on regulating marijuana sales, which continued through Saturday, has drawn scores of speakers with strong views both for and against.

One group, Smart Approaches to Marijuana Canada, unsuccessfully called on people to boycott the hearing, but many didn't: More than 180 speakers signed up to address council over three sessions so far.

The hearing, which resumes June 22, is to discuss a proposed amendment to the zoning and development bylaw that will include a new conditional land use, plus a new category in the licence bylaw called "retail dealer — medical marijuana-related use."

The regulations would also include an annual

licence fee of \$30,000, a ban on customers 18 and under, and a 300-metre minimum distance between stores and from schools and community centres.

City manager **Penny Ballem** has said the number of stores dramatically increased after 2012 when the federal government indicated it would change the rules on access to medical marijuana.

Ottawa has told the mayor that the stores are illegal and the city should not be regulating them. Vancouver is the first city to try to do so.

## [Mayor at ULI](#)

Mayor **Gregor Robertson** gives his annual address Wednesday to the **Urban Land Institute**.

The mayor is expected to discuss current and future issues at city hall,

particularly regarding affordable housing.

The event is from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Pinnacle Hotel Vancouver Waterfront, 1133 West Hastings.

For more information and tickets:

[www.britishcolumbia.uli.org/event/uli-bc-mayor-robertson-annual-address/](http://www.britishcolumbia.uli.org/event/uli-bc-mayor-robertson-annual-address/)

## [Open house for 225 Smithe](#)

An open house is scheduled for this evening for a 26-storey mixed-use building proposed at 225 Smithe.

**GBL Architects** has applied to rezone the downtown site at Smithe and Cambie from DD (downtown district) to CD-1 (comprehensive development) for the building, which would contain four floors of commercial space and 114 condos, with a density of 11.85 FSR.

The open house on the project is from 5 to 8 p.m. at the Hampton Inn and Suites, 111 Robson.

## [Musqueam Block F latest plan](#)

The **Musqueam First Nation** holds an open house Wednesday on a revised rezoning application for its Block F parcel in the University Endowment

Lands.

The band plans to develop the site across from the University Golf Club into a new mixed-use community with a large park in the middle.

Development plans, designed by **Rositch Hemphill Architects**, include a range of housing types and sizes in 10 residential buildings — including four 18-storey towers, buildings of up to six storeys and townhouses — a village square with a 30,000 square-foot retail centre in three buildings, one of which is 12 storeys, a child care centre, a community amenity building and the park.

An earlier proposal showed towers up to 22 storeys and a hotel on site, which was deleted.

The plan calls for 1,250 dwelling units are planned, 50 of which would be below-market rental. Suites will range from studios of 500 square feet to townhouses of up to 2,200 square feet. The housing is to be on 99-year prepaid leases with the **UBC Property Trust**.

The open house is from 4 to 8 p.m. at Norma Rose Point elementary school, 5488 Ortona Road on the UBC campus.



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# VANCOUVER BRIEFS

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More information on the project:

[www.placespeak.com/topic/508-uel-block-f-project-status/#!/overview](http://www.placespeak.com/topic/508-uel-block-f-project-status/#!/overview)

The rezoning application is at: [www.universityendowmentlands.gov.bc.ca/businessservices/blockf.htm](http://www.universityendowmentlands.gov.bc.ca/businessservices/blockf.htm)

[Affordability in Vancouver and Hong Kong](#)

**Friends of Hong Kong**

presents a panel discussion Friday on challenges that city has in common with Vancouver — particularly housing affordability. The panel will discuss contributing factors, such as demographics, immigration, foreign money, land supply and financial factors.

On the panel are University of B.C. professor **David Ley**, Vancouver city Councillor **Adriane Carr**, *Vancouver Observer* editor **Sandy Garossino** and **Eveline Xia**, a community advocate who started the #DontHave1Million Twitter campaign.

The free event is from 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at the Park Inn and Suites, 898 West Broadway.

To register: <https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/panel-discussion-housing-affordability-the->

**[elephant-in-the-room-tickets-17206317559](#)**

[Beach Towers on hold](#)

The Beach Towers infill project, which was to add 118 new rental units to the four-tower West End site at Beach and Cardero, has been suspended.

**Devonshire Properties**, which owns the site, told tenants that it has decided not to proceed with its infill project. It had consisted of four-storey townhouse units facing Beach Avenue at 1600 Harwood and a nine-storey mid-rise apartment building, plus an amenity building, plus 15 units on the second site at 1625 Harwood across the street in two three-storey townhouses and two-storey townhouses on the lane.

The infill buildings were designed by **IBI/HB Architects**.

City council approved rezoning of the site more than two years ago and the development permit board approved the project in January.

[WERA stepping away](#)

The 20-year-old **West End Residents Association** has called it quits.

The association said on its website that it was formed in the lead-up to the city’s 1996

downtown transportation plan.

“WERA, from the beginning, differentiated itself as a group by proactively advocating for issues and projects to be implemented in Vancouver,” the website says. “Unlike some residents organizations that form to oppose some particular action in the city, WERA from the beginning advocated an active agenda of change.”

“WERA’s involvement in the downtown transportation plan was an attempt to change the infrastructure of the city to develop safer and better conditions for active transportation.” A second residents’ group, **West End Neighbours**, also exists in the community.

[Shaughnessy plan](#)

Vancouver city council has agreed to schedule a public hearing on a staff recommendation to make Shaughnessy the city’s first heritage conservation area.

That will include a new district zoning schedule aimed at protecting pre-1940 heritage and character buildings in the area and could also allow for some infill development.

The city did a year-long

review of the Shaughnessy official development plan as part of a larger new heritage action plan after a large increase in applications to demolish buildings in the historic elite neighbourhood.

An update on the heritage action plan will be heard at council later.

[DCL/CAC reports deferred](#)

City council’s discussion of the annual reports on developer cost levies and community amenity contributions has been deferred to the June 23 meeting.

The reports update the amounts of developer contributions and the community amenities, such as affordable housing, parks and child care. [nru](#)

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## VANCOUVER PEOPLE

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**Lorna Harvey**, assistant to the city’s urban design panel, development permit board and heritage committees, is retiring this week after 13 years at city hall.

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